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AN

ADDRESS

TO THE

PUBLIC,

ON THE

PRESENT STATE OF FARRIERY.

BY *JAMES JEFFRAY*, A. M.

LATE PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL MEDICAL SOCIETY, EDINBURGH, *&c.*

AND FARRIER TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE OF WALES

FOR SCOTLAND.

[*DEDICATED, BY PERMISSION, TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS.*]

EDINBURGH. 1786.

TO

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS

GEORGE PRINCE OF WALES,

THE FOLLOWING ATTEMPT

TO TURN THE ATTENTION OF

A HUMANE AND GENEROUS NATION,

TO THE

DISEASES OF DOMESTIC ANIMALS,

PARTICULARLY HORSES,

IS HUMBLY DEDICATED,

BY

HIS MOST DEVOTED AND FAITHFUL SERVANT,

JAMES JEFFRAY.

IL eſt bien ſingulier, q'un être qui nous fait autant de plaiſir, qui nous eſt ſi généralement utile que le Cheval, *ſoit auſſi négligé par ceux même qui en tirent journellement le plus grand avantage ; et ce qu'il y a de plus étonnant, que ce ſoit encore moins par le manque de ſoins, que par erreur ſur ceux que l'on apporte mal à propos, que nous le rendons victime de notre ineptie.*

M. MOTTIN DE LA BALME.

Ecquis vero futurum Hippiatrum docebit, ſi nullus Profeſſor eſt ?

COLUMELLA.

AN ADDRESS TO THE PUBLIC.

DOMESTIC ANIMALS are, perhaps, more eſteemed in England than any where elſe; and of more general uſe, not only in ſupplying the wants, and diminiſhing the labour, but in adminiſtering to the pleaſures of life; yet in no other country in Europe are they ſo much neglected, when under diſeaſe. The diſorders of ſheep and dogs have ſcarcely as yet been thought worthy of notice:—The cure of the maladies to which cattle are liable, is generally attempted by amulets and charms:—And, with reſpect to Farriery, thoſe who are beſt acquainted with it, lament, that, even in England, it is an art deſtitute of principle; and that, as it is in the hands of empyrics, illiterate and inimical to ſcience, there is no proſpect of its improvement.

WHAT may be the cauſe of this general neglect, is not eaſy to determine. It might have been expected that, in a country where ſo many devote themſelves, daily, to the ſtudy of Medicine, curioſity a-

lone would have led phyſicians to turn their attention to the diſeaſes of theſe ſerviceable animals :—And when we conſider how much light an acquaintance with their diſorders might throw on the diſeaſes of man; and that our intereſt, as well as our humanity, is frequently concerned in relieving their ſufferings; the neglect with which they have hitherto been treated, appears equally imprudent and criminal.

It is not probable, however, that men of abilities and learning will ever ſeriouſly turn their attention to this ſubject, as a profeſſion, ſo long as they find they can acquire more honour, and more emolument, by practiſing Medicine. The French have not only ſeen the importance of attending to it, but conſidered it as a matter of national concern: And in order to cultivate, to diffuſe, and perpetuate their diſcoveries and improvements, they have inſtituted *Veterinarian* Schools. The other nations of Europe are following their example; and even in Portugal, a prize has lately been decreed to the beſt diſſertation on the diſeaſes of domeſtic animals.

To equal, if not excel, every other nation in Europe in this department of knowledge, it is only neceſſary, that a plan which ſhall meet with general approbation, be adopted, and vigorouſly purſued. For, in England, there are circumſtances favourable to the improvement of Farriery which exiſt no where elſe, and which will operate ſo long as the preſent taſte for manly exerciſes continues. Whereas, on the Continent, the progreſs of Medicine itſelf is retarded, by a variety of powerful cauſes; originating, in general, from the low eſtimation in which, in theſe countries, the profeſſion of Phyſic is held.

THE following thoughts on the preſent ſtate of Farriery are therefore ſubmitted to the conſideration of all thoſe in this country whom the ſubject may concern: and it is hoped, that the outlines of the plan here propoſed, for cultivating the *Veterinarian Art* on an extended ſcale, and as a ſcience; but, above all, for raiſing *Farriery* from its preſent ſtate of a mechanical art to be a branch of Medicine, will meet with a favourable reception.

IT is not intended, by any thing that may be here advanced, to throw any reflection on the preſent Profeſſors of Farriery. On the contrary, when I hear Gentlemen complaining of the many miſtakes and blunders daily committed by Blackſmiths and Grooms, I cannot reſiſt the deſire I feel to plead their excuſe; and to aſſert, that, conſidering the education they receive, and the few helps they have to the acquiſition of knowledge in their profeſſion, they practiſe with more ſucceſs than could reaſonably have been expected.

THERE is not one book on Farriery, in which the hiſtory and ſymptoms of diſeaſes are accurately ſtated; and there are but few Grooms or Farriers, obſtinately attached as they are to the traditionary opinions of their illiterate maſters, whoſe ſagacity can lead them to ſupply the defect. The truth is, few of them read, and ſtill fewer think. "When an apprentice," ſays an author on this ſubject, "has ſerved out his time, a few receipts (the ſame that from "time out of mind have been handed down from maſter to man) "ſerve to ſet him up; and, fully contented, he ſeeks to know no "more."

YET it muſt be allowed, that a Farrier ought to be more expert in diſtinguiſhing diſeaſes, than a Phyſician: for the patients of the latter

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can deſcribe their ſenſations, and inform him where their pains lie; but thoſe of the former have no way of making known their complaints, but by the language of Nature; and that, in general, is either not underſtood, or not regarded.

In an art practiſed ſo much at random, as apparently to ſet every attempt at generalization and principle at defiance, we ſhould not expect to meet with a great deal of what is commonly, though very improperly, called *Theory*. Yet you cannot open a book on Farriery that is not filled with the moſt abſurd conceits, and exploded doctrines, which, from century to century, one author has copied from another, without examining the facts on which they were ſuppoſed to be founded, or knowing that, in Medicine, they had been overturned by the obſervations and experiments of later ages. For it has been obſerved, that if any thing new in Medicine once got a place and credit in Farriery, there it remained; it was handed down from author to author, and from maſter to man, till at laſt the books and ſyſtems of Farriery came to be the repoſitories of ſhreds and patches, from all the monſtrous and miſhapen doctrines that have at different times appeared in the medical world.

But though the Theory of Farriery be ſo infinitely below contempt, as not even to merit the ſcourge of ridicule; it becomes the object of more ſerious animadverſion, when viewed in its influence on *Practice*. It is not here, however, I would cenſure the pernicious uſe of bleeding in all diſeaſes, however oppoſite in their nature or cauſe; nor is this the place to expoſe the cuſtom of cramming the poor animals, on every trifling occaſion, with purging balls and piſſing pills, and pouring down their throats drenches and ſweating draughts: But if the plan to be afterwards propoſed meet with approbation and ſupport,

port, theſe, and the many other abſurd and dangerous errors in the preſent practice of Farriery, ſhall elſewhere be made the ſubject of a more ample diſcuſſion.

UNFORTUNATELY too, for the poor animals, it is generally believed, that the ſenſations of a horſe, who cannot expreſs in words what he ſuffers, are not ſo acute as ours; and Farriers, &c. under the influence of this opinion, ſeem, hitherto, to have laid it down as a maxim, that no more regard ſhould be paid to his feelings, in the chirurgical operations he undergoes, than if he were a piece of rude and inanimated matter.

THE Moors, to whom we are indebted for the revival of ancient Medicine, applied to ſimple wounds of the human body, the moſt ſtimulant and irritating medicines; and they amputated limbs with red-hot knives. But, though the moderns cultivate with ſucceſs a ſyſtem of ſurgery of a leſs barbarous nature, the horrid operations of the ancients are retained in Farriery, improved only in the circumſtances of cruelty and pain.—Hot and irritating oils are burnt in upon inflamed parts; the concentrated acid of vitriol is poured into wounds; abſceſſes are opened; blood veſſels feared; tendons and bones laid bare with burning inſtruments; ſcalding charges of the moſt penetrating reſins are applied to ſores; and rowels inſerted into different parts of the body, in every diſeaſe whoſe nature and ſeat is unknown.—Had a tribe of Cherokee Indians ſat down to invent a ſyſtem of torture for this patient and ſerviceable animal, what could they have done more!

THERE is a period, in the hiſtory of the Medicine of every nation, in which ſkill in the profeſſion is placed in an extenſive acquaint-

ance with remedies and recipes for curing every diſeaſe; but the number of theſe invariably diminiſhes, as our knowledge of the animal economy increaſes, and the operation of medicines comes to be known. Perhaps, there is no country where the *Materia Medica* has undergone ſuch a complete reformation as in Britain. In each claſs of medicines, a few, of known and general efficacy, are retained; while the enormous heaps of the uſeleſs traſh of former ages, are thrown aſide, and juſtly neglected.

But when we look into the books of Farriery, what a farrago!—what an endleſs variety of herbs for poultices, for emollient and detergent drinks! &c.—What an innumerable liſt of carminatives, alteratives, and ſweeteners of the blood; together with all the *varieties* of purgatives, ſudorifics, and diuretics, gliſter ſtuffs, corroders of fungous fleſh, cicatrizers of wounds, &c. &c. not to mention *ſpecifics* and *invaluable noſtrums!*

Before theſe errors and abuſes be reformed, Farriery muſt be ſtudied, not as a ſyſtem of empyriciſm, conſiſting of complex, inelegant recipes, and jarring contradictory facts; but as a branch of Medicine, and on a ſcientific plan.

But this will not be done, ſo long as Blackſmiths and Grooms, like the prieſts of ſome groſs ſuperſtition, whoſe exiſtence and ſway depend on the ignorance of its votaries, find it their intereſt to throw an air of myſtery over their art. They ſeem to be afraid, that if men of ſcience turn their attention to this ſubject, the practice of Farriery will be wreſted from them, and lodged in worthier hands: and, as if they had determined to prevent any attempt that may be made to remand them to the cleaning of ſtables, and forging of ſhoes, their proper

proper and original employments; they have been, on all occaſions, at the greateſt pains to propagate and ſupport an opinion, that no man can know ſo much about Farriery, as thoſe perſons whoſe duty leads them to be continually among horſes. But why is not the idea carried to its full extent?—Why do they not add, that no *Phyſician* can know ſo much about the diſeaſes of the human ſpecies as a *Sick-Nurſe*, whoſe duty leads *her* to ſpend the greateſt part of her time by a bed-ſide?—Or, that a Chaldee aſtronomer could ſee the Satellites of Jupiter more diſtinctly with his naked eye, than a modern philoſopher with the teleſcope of Galileo!

WERE this opinion only a vulgar error, we would paſs it over in ſilence: but, as it is a prejudice of conſiderable influence and extent, acquired in general at an early period of life, among Grooms and in Stables, where, for many reaſons, this topic is a favourite theme, we ſhall obſerve, that if no more be meant by it, than that a Groom or a Blackſmith muſt know more about Farriery, than a perſon who ſeldom ſees a horſe, except when he has occaſion to mount him, the propoſition is a ſelf-evident one; and ſo far from pretending to deny it, we would ſay, *Valeat quantum valere poſſit.*

BUT if it be intended to inſinuate, that none but *thoſe who have been bred in a ſtable*, can know any thing, either of the conſtitution, of the management, or of the diſeaſes of horſes, we would oppoſe and reject it, as a popular and erroneous opinion.

WHAT can there be in the nature of this art ſo inimical to ſcience, as to render it unintelligible to men of a liberal education, and a cultivated underſtanding? If an acquaintance with its ſecrets cannot be acquired by philoſophical inveſtigation, patient obſervation, and accurate

rate experiment, for which indeed Blackſmiths and Grooms have ſeldom been famed, there remains but one other way, namely, revelation, in which a ſuperior knowledge in Farriery can be communicated to its illiterate profeſſors; and, if we may judge by the implicit confidence which many are diſpoſed to place in their *ſkill*, we ſhould conclude, that they really ſucceed in making the world believe, that ſome unerring impulſe directs their unprincipled practice.

But let us ſuppoſe for a moment, (though the contrary has in part been already demonſtrated, by Snape, Gibſon, Bourgelat, De la Foſſe, and the Gentlemen of the Veterinarian Schools), that the conſtitution of a horſe is really and eſſentially different from that of man—that his diſeaſes have nothing in common with thoſe of the human ſpecies—nay, that what will cure a man, will kill a horſe; and, of courſe, that a good Phyſician muſt not only be a bad Farrier; but, that knowledge in Medicine, in proportion to its extent, diſqualifies its poſſeſſors for the practice of Farriery;—ſtill it may be aſked, What are theſe *peculiarities*, ſo much talked of, in the conſtitution of a horſe? If any ſuch exiſt, they *may* and *ought* to be pointed out. What are the circumſtances that diſtinguiſh his diſeaſes from thoſe of man? and laſtly, What are the medicines which produce in him, effects, different, not in degree, but in kind, from thoſe produced by the ſame medicines on the human body?

Except in theſe particulars, even according to their own account, Medicine and Farriery agree. If Grooms and Blackſmiths be acquainted with any of theſe ſecrets, and will not divulge them, we will ſay, they are not honeſt men. But if, on the other hand, they know them not, (and as yet they have given no proofs of their knowledge,

ledge, but poſitive unſupported aſſertions), why do they not attempt to obtain an acquaintance with theſe arcana, and avail themſelves of ſuch ſuperior knowledge in practice? And in what way, we would aſk, can this be done, but by ſtudying Farriery, on the plan that has brought Medicine to its preſent ſtate?

On the whole, we would ſay, that a ſcientific knowledge of Anatomy, of the phænomena and cauſes of diſeaſes, together with an accurate acquaintance with the operation of remedies, ſo eſſentially neceſſary in Medicine, is equally uſeful and neceſſary in Farriery; and, that an acquaintance with the ſtructure, diſeaſes, and remedies of other animals, particularly of man, added to the ſtock of knowledge to be acquired in a ſtable, will make a Blackſmith, or a Groom, a better Farrier, however qualified he might have previouſly been.

Taking it, then, as a point granted, as a poſtulate which no man of reflection will deny, *That Farriery may be underſtood by any one who applies to it, whether he be Groom, Phyſician, or Amateur; and improved by the ſame means, that have brought Medicine to its preſent ſtate of comparative perfection:* the next queſtion that occurs is, Where can it be ſtudied to the greateſt advantage?

So far as I know, there never have been any lectures given in Britain on the diſeaſes of horſes. Nor has the idea occurred to any one, of erecting ſtables, or an infirmary for ſick horſes, where the ſtudent might, in a ſhort time, get acquainted with the appearances of diſeaſes, and have an opportunity of obſerving the operation of medicines in the cure.

At preſent, every one who wiſhes to acquire a ſuperior knowledge in this art, muſt either diſſect alone, and read over the innumer-

able and voluminous authors, who have written on this ſubject, without having any one to aſſiſt him in clearing away their rubbiſh, and condenſing their ſcattered facts; or, he muſt go to Paris or Lyons, and ſtudy at the Veterinarian Schools.

In theſe ſeminaries, founded and endowed by the Crown, Profeſſors are appointed to lecture on the anatomy and phyſiology of Horſes; on their diſeaſes, and the medicines employed in their cure: And there are extenſive ſtables for horſes labouring under every different kind of diſeaſe, where the ſtudent has it in his power to ſee the truth or fallacy of what he reads, or hears, fully eſtabliſhed or overthrown, by an immediate and candid appeal to practice. Pupils have been ſent almoſt from every court in Europe: That of Britain as yet has ſent none.

But, ſuppoſe an eleve of Britain returned, with all the information that extenſive reading, a long and unwearied attention to practice, and an attendance on the lectures of theſe ſchools can give; what laſting benefit can be derived from his ſuperior knowledge, if no effectual plan be adopted to diffuſe what he knows, and to ſtir up throughout the land a general deſire to cultivate and improve this art?

This can only be done by the inſtitution of an Academy, on a plan ſomewhat ſimilar to that of the Veterinarian Schools. There the firſt object muſt be, *To demonſtrate the ſtructure of the Horſe, and to point out the nature, the cauſes, and the ſeat of his various diſorders*; the ſecond, *To aſcertain the effects of medicines on him, and the peculiarities of his conſtitution.*

To accompliſh the firſt of theſe ends, a proper place muſt be fitted up for diſſection, demonſtration, and preſerving preparations, to ſhew the

the ſtructure of his different parts in health, and their derangement in diſeaſe. As for the laſt, it is impoſſible it can be effected, except the horſes be continually under the eye of the *Mareſchall*, and entruſted to his people alone; which renders the erection of Stables, or an Infirmary, abſolutely neceſſary.

It is evident that a conſiderable expence muſt be incurred, before this plan can be executed in its full extent; and I am ſorry to ſay, it will not be in my power alone to defray it. But, when I conſider who have ſollicited this publication, how ſeverely the want of an inſtitution of this nature is felt, and how long and earneſtly Gentlemen have wiſhed to ſee ſome ſuch plan attempted; I cannot for a moment ſuppoſe there will be any difficulty in raiſing, by ſubſcription, the few hundred pounds that will be neceſſary to carry it into execution. A very trifle from every individual who wiſhes well to this eſtabliſhment, would build and endow a *Convent*; and I will venture to ſay, that the humane intention and general utility of this inſtitution will not do leſs honour to *its* founders, nor to the age.

It muſt likewiſe occur to every one, that the proſecution of the ſtudy of this ſubject, on the extenſive plan here propoſed; particularly, the attending the Veterinarian Schools on the Continent, to be able to give, in the form of Lectures, a more complete view of what has already been done, or is moſt eſſential and neceſſary to be known in Farriery, will be attended with an expence and labour, which it would be imprudent to encounter, without ſome previous aſſurance of patronage and ſupport, when I ſhall return. In what manner this can be moſt effectually done, I muſt, for the preſent, leave to be determined by thoſe who wiſh well to the undertaking, and whoſe approbation of the plan may lead them to intereſt themſelves

ſelves in its ſucceſs; and ſhall only obſerve, that the certain proſpect of a revenue, equal to the one half or one third of what a few only pay annually for Farriers Bills, would be more than ſufficient to determine me, not only to proſecute the ſtudy, but to devote myſelf to the practice of this branch of Medicine.

It remains with the Public to ſay, whether or not I ſhall go on.